

Chamber. Roll call. Senator Warner, would you please record your presence. Senator Chambers, please, Senator Chronister, Senator Conway. Senator Higgins, please. Senator Lynch, Senator Rod Johnson. House is under call. We're looking for Senator Chambers, Senator Rod Johnson, Senator Chronister and Senator Rogers. Please proceed, Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, the reason that I wanted the house to be under call, as I made my final remarks on this kill motion on LB 258, is very simple. Many members were absent during the discussion of this issue over the last 30 minutes, and it seemed to me that before members are called on to vote upon this important question, whether it be to kill this measure or to advance it, that all members should at least have an opportunity to hear my reasons as to why this measure is not a healthy measure, in my view, for the state. Senator Warner and the Appropriations Committee, in effect, are proposing that this Legislature, in the future, adopt a budget for the state for two years as opposed to an annual budget, which we currently do and have done for a number of years. Most American states adopt annual budgets. Only a few American states adopt biennial budgets. The basic experience of American states, today, is to adopt annual budgets. The reasons are very simple. Annual budgets allow for annual accountings, annual accountings to a Legislature as to what has occurred in the previous 12 months, through state expenditures, and what is to occur in the next 12 months. The primary rationale for an annual budget is a frequent and meaningful accountability to the elected officers of that state as to what has happened and what will happen. If Nebraska was to go to a two-year budget cycle we would join the minority of states that have the two-year budget cycle. Right now we are in the majority of states that have a one-year budget cycle. The policy of the other states and our state is to require accountability. Accountability is done in a meaningful public manner through an annual budget. That is how it is done through an annual budget. The argument for the two-year budget, that has been advanced by the members of the Appropriations Committee, is that a two-year budget allows state agencies more planning time and more certainty. One of the things that Senator Warner told us this morning, and it should not be forgotten, is that the Appropriations Committee, today, requires all state agencies to submit a two-year budget document. They